

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 FEA-01 ERDA-07 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 CIEP-02 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FPC-01 H-02

INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04

USIA-15 OES-06 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-10

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R 021500Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8050

INFO USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL OPORTO

UNCLAS LISBON 5175

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECON, ENRG, EIND, PO

SUBJ: GOP SUSPENDS ELECTRICITY CUTS IN AUGUST

REF: (A) LISBON 4496 (B) LISBON 4542 (C) LISBON 4567

1. GOP ANNOUNCED JULY 30 THAT IT WILL, DURING FIRST THREE WEEKS OF AUGUST, "PROVISIONALLY" SUSPEND DAILY 90-MINUTE ELECTRICITY INTERRUPTIONS (REFTELS). SUSPENSION POSSIBLE BECAUSE ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION NORMALLY DECLINES MARKEDLY DURING THIS PEAK VACATION MONTH, WHEN MANY FACTORIES ARE CLOSED OR OPERATING AT REDUCED LEVELS. HOWEVER, CONSUMERS WERE REQUESTED TO CONTINUE CONSERVING ELECTRICITY PER REFTel (A). GOP ANNOUNCEMENT EMPHASIZED THAT CUTS COULD BE REIMPOSED

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AT ANY TIME SHOULD SUPPLY PROBLEMS OCCUR.

IN ANY CASE, IT STATED, METEOROLOGISTS ARE PREDICTING A
"PROLONGED CONTINUATION" OF PRESENT DROUGHT, AND GOP
WILL BE "FORCED" TO RETURN TO ELECTRICITY RATIONING IN SEPTEMBER.

2. COMMENT: AFTER INITIAL DIFFICULTIES DESCRIBED IN REFTELS (B)
AND (C), COUNTRY MORE OR LESS ADJUSTED TO DAILY POWER CUTS.
ALTHOUGH ELECTRICIDADE DE PORTUGAL (DEP) HAD PLANNED ORIGINALLY
TO STAGGER ELECTRICITY INTERRUPTIONS, IT DECIDED SUBSEQUENTLY
TO MAINTAIN UNIFORM SCHEDULE. INDUSTRIES OR BUSINESSES FORTUNATE
ENOUGH TO BE ON SAME POWER LINE AS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE NEVER
HAD THEIR POWER CUT. IN SOME CASES, INDUSTRIES WHICH FORMED
THE BULK OF CUSTOMERS ON A POWER LINE REACHED AGREEMENT WITH
EDP TO OBTAIN CONTINUOUS POWER IN RETURN FOR REDUCED CONSUMPTION.
OTHER COMPANIES OBTAINED AUXILIARY GENERATORS TO POWER ESSENTIAL
MACHINERY, AND SOME HOTELS ARRANGED AUXILIARY POWER FOR ONE
ELEVATOR. MANY OTHERS SIMPLY DID WITHOUT POWER. GOP HAS RELEASED
NO ESTIMATES ON EFFECT CUTS HAVE HAD ON INDUSTRIAL
PRODUCTION.
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